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# PHIL 105.01: Existentialism

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**EXISTENTIALISM**  
**PHIL 105, SECTION 01 (32203)**  
**JEANNETTE RANKIN HALL, ROOM 202**  
**MW 12:40-2:00**  
**SPRING SEMESTER 2004**

Professor: David Sherman  
Office: LA 153, ext. 2607

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A philosophical and literary movement, existentialism was a reaction to the ascendancy of the scientific paradigm in the modern world, or, to be more precise, "scientism," namely, the universalization of this paradigm. Around the 1600's, science overthrew Christian dogma as that against which all human endeavors were measured, and, concurrently, philosophy increasingly came to understand itself in scientific terms. This led to the "objectification" of the world, as is evidenced in Descartes' inauguration of modern philosophy. Ultimately, however, it was Hegel's rationalistic philosophy in the early 1800's that was the proximate cause of existentialism. Hegel's grand, all-encompassing "system," which culminated in "Absolute Knowing," seemingly left nothing out. What became increasingly insignificant in this "totalizing" movement from Descartes to Hegel, however, was the very object of the enlightenment's supposed concern, namely, "the individual."

Although a varied bunch, then, what the existentialists shared was a concern with the fate of the individual in the modern world. We shall begin the course with two short novels and an essay by Camus, which will help frame many of the philosophical issues in the course. We shall then consider the philosophical works of the two most important existential philosophers of the 19th century, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, as well as a short literary extract and essay by Dostoyevsky. We shall conclude the course by considering the two most important existential philosophers of the 20th century, Heidegger and Sartre.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom (Eds), *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, Hackett  
Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, Random House/Vintage  
Albert Camus, *The Fall*, Random House/Vintage  
FAC-PAC: Excerpts from:

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*  
G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*  
Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from the Underground*  
Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

Although the readings are difficult, you are only required to read, roughly, 30-40 pages a week. Therefore, carefully read the assigned text both before and after class, and, since there will be close textual analysis, bring the text to class.

Your grade is based on three exams of equal weight. The tests are scheduled for February 25, March 24, and May 14, but I reserve the right to reschedule the first two tests (with one week notice) if we do not move through the materials at a corresponding speed. Unless evidence of emergency or serious illness is provided, make-up tests will not be arranged.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Page numbers refer to *Existentialism: Basic Writings*

WEEK:	READINGS:
Jan 26 Jan 28	Introduction to Existentialism Camus, <i>The Stranger</i>
Feb 2 Feb 4	Camus (FAC-PAC) Camus, <i>The Fall</i>
Feb 9 Feb 11	Hegel (19-25; FAC-PAC) Kierkegaard (26-55)
Feb 16 Feb 18	PRESIDENTS' DAY Kierkegaard (55-77)
Feb 23 Feb 25	Kierkegaard (78-92) FIRST EXAM
Mar 1 Mar 3	Nietzsche (119-142) Nietzsche (142-148)
Mar 8 Mar 10	Nietzsche (148-160) Nietzsche (160-171)
Mar 15 Mar 17	Nietzsche (172-181) Nietzsche (FAC-PAC)
Mar 22 Mar 24	Dostoyevsky (FAC-PAC) SECOND EXAM
Mar 29 Mar 31	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
Apr 5 Apr 7	From Husserl to Heidegger Heidegger (211-219)
Apr 12 Apr 14	Heidegger (219-236) Heidegger (236-246)
Apr 19 Apr 21	Heidegger (246-254) Sartre's Early Phenomenology
Apr 26 Apr 28	Sartre (290-309) Sartre (309-328)
May 3 May 5	Sartre (328-348) Sartre (348-362)
May 14	THIRD EXAM (10:10-12:10)